DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 988 JC 890 234

AUTHOR Muntz, Palmer H.
TITLE A New Type of Staff In-Service: Chemeketa Community College's Fall Kick-Off.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Planning; Community Colleges; Faculty Development; Needs Assessment; *Staff Development; *Student Needs; Teacher Participation; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Chemeketa Community College OR; *Community Needs

ABSTRACT

In fall 1988, Chemeketa Community College (CCC) of Salem, Oregon, experimented with a new approach to in-service staff development. The new strategy had four purposes: to raise campus awareness of CCC's customers; to promote active, rather than passive, participation in staff development; to bring employees throughout the campus together across departmental and functional lines; and to generate new and specific strategies for meeting student and community needs. CCC's full-time staff was divided into 50 small groups, each including representatives from various college divisions and organizational levels. Then, a focus group consisting of a carefully selected cross-section of CCC students was asked to discuss how well the college was meeting its stated goals. The focus group's discussion was broadcast live campus-wide to locations where the small groups were gathered. After viewing the broadcast, each small group met for two hours under the guidance of a trained facilitator to: (1) identify and assign priority to the issues that had been raised by the focus group; (2) discuss ideas for improving campus services; and (3) arrive at some type of "Action Plan" addressing one or more of these issues. Subsequently, a second focus group comprised of community representatives was formed and its discussion was broadcast to the campus. The small groups then attempted to revise their original action plan or devise a new plan. Two weeks later, a report was presented and disseminated, and a series of campus-wide open forums were set up to deal with specific needs, such as child care and high school relations. By May 1989, over half a dozen action plans, ranging from the simple to the complex, had been implemented by the small group members. (ALB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED306988

A New Type of Staff In-Service:

Chemeketa Community College's Fall Kick-Off

Palmer H. Muntz

Oregon State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. H. Muntz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Running head: A NEW TYPE OF STAFF IN-SERVICE

JC 890 234

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

In 1988, Chemeketa Community College of Salem, Oregon, experimented with a new approach to staff in-service. The new strategy involved dividing the entire staff into small groups which sought to create plans addressing the needs of the college and its customers. The ideas for these plans grew out of viewing focus group discussions regarding student and community perceptions of the college. As a result of the in-service week, a large number of suggestions were made and several action plans were implemented. Cross-campus communication across departmental and functional lines was also improved through the program.

A New Type of Staff In-Service:
Chemeketa Community College's Fall Kick-Off

Introduction

Traditionally, the faculty and staff of Chemeketa Community College (Salem, Oregon) begin each academic year with an in-service program. In the past, this typically involved bringing in a special speaker--an expert in a particular area--to address the employees. Yearly evaluations revealed that some employees felt these speakers were of great benefit while others found the in-service programs to be a waste of time.

It was decided that a new approach should be tried for the Fall of 1988. This new strategy involved a different type of experts. As the "Chemeketa in Focus" introductory materials put it:

> The experts we will be listening to do not come from more than 50 miles away, and most do not carry a briefcase. But they know Chemeketa like no imported expert can--they are our students and the citizens of the community.

The input gleaned from these experts--the college's customers--would then be used as a starting place for small group discussions involving almost every college employee.

This paper will explain briefly why the "Chemeketa in Focus" program, also known as "Fall Kick-Off," was conceived. It will also discuss how the program was organized and what the outcomes have been. It will conclude by discussing its success and noting

a couple of problems that came to light as the program was implemented.

Why

As mentioned earlier, some Chemeketa employees failed to find much value in traditional in service activities. Vicki Willis, a Human Resource Development Specialist in Chemeketa's Planning and Development Office, and Connie Green, assistant to President William Segura, suggested that the college adapt an activity used by the Oregon-Washington Conference on Student Success Strategies to revitalize in-service. (The conference participants would divide into small groups to implement student success ideas. Each group included people from different campuses holding various professional roles.) An ad hoc committee at Chemeketa developed this approach further before the president's cabinet adopted it for Fall 1988.

The in-service planners had four goals in mind. First, they hoped to raise campus awareness of Chemeketa's customers: its students and the community around Salem. Second, they desired to have an in-service program in which people could actively participate, rather than one in which they became passive on-lookers. The third goal involved bringing employees from throughout the campus together, crossing departmental and functional lines in doing so. Finally, they wished to generate new and specific strategies for meeting the needs of the students and community.

How

From a logistical point of view, putting together an event which organized over 500 people into fifty small groups was not a simple task. Every effort was made to involve all full-time employees with the Fall Kick-Off. While laying a solid foundation ahead of time took a lot of energy, the bulk of the Kick-Off's activity occurred in just two days, a Monday and Wednesday in mid-September.

Monday's program began with the first "Focus Group." This Focus Group consisted of a carefully selected cross-section of Chemeketa's students who were asked about their perceptions regarding how well the college was meeting its stated goals. They were also asked to suggest how certain college services might be improved. The Focus Group's discussion was broadcast live campus-wide and was hosted by Alan Koch, Chemeketa's director of marketing, publications and student activities.

Throughout the campus, all the employees gathered together in their pre-arranged "Small Groups" to view the sixty minute broadcast. Each was given a copy of Chemeketa's direction statement so that the college's goals could be kept in mind while considering the Focus Group's comments. The Small Groups were selected in such a way that each included representatives from various college divisions and organizational levels. Only top administrators were not involved, for fear some employees might be intimidated by their presence.

After viewing the broadcast, which was taped for future reference, each Small Group met for about two hours under the guidance of a trained staff member acting as facilitator. The facilitator was expected to guide the group, delegate specific tasks, and help the group assess its own progress. He or she began by distributing an outline showing what the group's purpose was and how it could fulfill that purpose. In this way the group felt greater ownership of the tasks at hand. The facilitator then led the group in establishing its own ground rules for meeting.

The Small Group then identified some of the issues they heard raised by the Focus Group. In turn, related issues could be discussed. (For instance, the group may have heard the Focus Group complain that students found it difficult to access campus services. This then might have led a Small Group member to say that the community also needs to be informed about what services are available at Chemeketa.) Finally, the issues were prioritized so that the group targeted those they felt were of greatest importance.

The Small Groups then discussed ideas for improving campus services. Using the cross-campus perspectives present in each group, possible strategies were formulated to deal with the most important issues. The goal was to arrive at some type of "Action Plan" addressing one or more concerns.

These Action Plans could take several forms. The group as a whole might get excited about a particular issue, quickly forming ideas regarding what can be done about it. On the other hand, other groups might find it more feasible to split into two or more sub-groups to address several issues, with each sub-group devising its own Action Plans. (Individuals were welcome to work on their own personal Action Plans, too.) Of course, still other groups could find themselves wrapped up in discussing issues, never developing a plan.

The Action Plans were to follow a prescribed outline answering the following series of questions:

What is your group/individual GOAL?

What STEPS will you take to reach your goal?

If it is a group goal, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for handling/facilitating activities at each step?

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED in decision-making at each step?

WHEN do you expect to accomplish each step?

What additional RESOURCES will you need to reach your goal?

How will you know when your goal has been accomplished?

A last, optional question asked the groups to identify how they would celebrate reaching their goals. Those forming Action Plans were to answer these questions as a means of reporting the strategies that had been devised. This provided the format for later reporting Action Plans to all members of the Chemeketa family (Appendix I).

At the end of Monday's Small Group sessions, the facilitators attempted to identify which members would return for Wednesday's sessions. One mark of the Fall Kick-off's success was that 80 percent of those who attended Monday's meetings chose to return for Wednesday's.

Wednesday also began with a Focus Group broadcast, but this Focus Group consisted of members of the community. After listening to the second Focus Group's point of view and identifying the issues raised, the Small Groups had several options. The first option was to stick with the original Action Plan suggested on Monday. Second, information gleaned from Wednesday's Focus Group could be used in modifying that first Action Plan. Other Small Groups might choose a new issue sparked by Wednesday's Focus Group, then develop a new group Action Plan. Finally, some could propose personal Action Plans arising from the discussion of new issues. The Action Plan outline used on Monday was again used in Wednesday's work.

What

The Small Group times were more than simply brain-storming sessions because of the Action Plans. In addition, the Action Plans allowed the group to have ownership of their ideas, to put their own energies and resources into seeing them come to fruition. Some projects required additional funding approvals, and others required release time for some employees, while some were more easily accomplished.

Two weeks after the Fall Kick-Off, President Bill Segura distributed a 93-page memorandum summarizing its outcomes. The first paragraph stated:

> The size of the attached report attests to the hard work of the fifty small groups during Fall Kick-Off week. Fifty summaries, including 81 Action Plans, were turned in at the end of the week. Out of those plans, we had 37 group plans that were 'fleshed out,' and 16 individual plans. The remaining plans were great ideas, but were not totally developed.

The report went on to present an "Action Plan Summary" (Appendix II), a complete outline of each Small Group's Action Plan (Appendix I), a list of individual Action Plans, and 41 pages of briefly stated brainstorm-type ideas.

The Action Plan Summary listed each plan and provided two columns: "Go" and "Review." If the Go column was marked for a particular plan, then that plan had already been given the go ahead for action. (One plan had already been fully implemented by this point in time!) With regard to the Review column, Segura wrote:

> Those [plans] marked for review require resources to implement, or have a significant impact on the work of one or more units of the college. We'd like to consider all the action plans ... with as many interested staff as possible.

To facilitate this, a series of campus-wide open forums were set up. Each forum dealt with the Action Plans associated with a specific area, such as child care or high school relations. The forums were designed to allow Action Plan presentations by the Small Groups that developed them, clarification of those plans, discussion of what needed to be done to take those ideas from the idea stage to reality, and the opportunity to prioritize the various plans. One final forum allowed all the prioritized items from earlier forums to be reviewed, discussed and put into action.

By May 1989, over half a dozen Action Plans ranging from the simple to the complex had actually been implemented, or were in that process. Several of these will be summarized in the following paragraphs.

The group Dark Velvet (names were selected in advance--from literary works--by Fall Kick-Off organizers) was able to complete its project during in-service week. They produced a self-examination checklist whose purpose was to provide a way for individual staff members to critically consider the attitudes they present to students and campus visitors. This was distributed to all staff members.

The members of Mirrorlight felt that Chemeketa's students and employees could benefit from a concise guide listing all the resources on campus related to job hunting. Through the Cooperative Work Experience/Placement Service office and the

Library and Media Service Staff, they produced a list of videotapes, books, directories and periodicals available at Chemeketa on subjects such as resume writing, interviewing, employment trends, and career changes. The guide was distributed to all faculty for use in advising students.

Another Small Group conducted an in-house survey to find out what needs existed on campus related to child care issues. This survey provided the basis for further proposals and planning on the subject.

Other groups worked on more complex Action Plans. Lively Harbor suggested that a funding pool be established that staff could access in order to develop new marketing programs. The college set aside almost $5000 to carry out this idea and a special selection committee was established to determine which projects should be funded by the "visibility grant awards!" Staff members were encouraged to submit marketing ideas that they would like to pursue. By April 1989, seven projects had been underwritten, to be completed by the end of the academic year. For instance, one employee developed a slide show marketing Chemeketa's dental assisting program, while two others put together a videotape presentation designed to attract high schoolers to the college's early childhood program. Still another staff member created and distributed a brochure promoting the gerontology program. Funds generally were used for staff release time or for needed resources, such as printing costs.

Conclusion

As noted earlier, the success of the Fall Kick-Off can be seen by the sheer number of Action Plans and ideas presented. While the number that actually had been implemented by year's end was relatively small, they still made significant contributions to the college.

Kick-Off organizers were pleased by the number of people who involved themselves in the Small Group times, and particularly by the 80 percent retention rate from Monday's sessions to Wednesday's. (The effectiveness of each group's facilitator had a great impact on that particular group's attrition.) In previous years, a much greater number of employees chose to participate in only the first day of the in-service. Vicki Willis felt that the program's third goal of bringing people together across departmental and functional lines was accomplished especially well.

The logistics of putting the Fall Kick-Off together were extremely complex. A dedicated team of organizers is vital to a successful program. In addition, the Small Group facilitators must be well prepared.

Willis also identified two problems related to the Action Plan process. The first was simply that the process dragged on for too long. The second was that the program called on people to create plans that were outside their own departments, so they sometimes lacked necessary knowledge or expertise.

Nonetheless, Chemeketa plans to use the Fall Kick-Off concept again, exploring new areas related to the college. This is perhaps the best testimony to the program's success in 1988.

Appendix I
Sample Action Plan Report

ACTION PLAN
GOLDEN HOOK

A. What is your group/individual GOAL?

Develop and implement a set of questions to find out why a high percent of students don't attend CCC immediately after high school.

B. What STEPS will you take to reach your goal?

(1) Develop a questionnaire
(2) Run questionnaire through local experts
(3) Printed questionnaire and random sampling
(4) Collect data
(5) Analize and share results in "Newsline"

C. If it is a group goal, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for handling/facilitating activities at each step?

(1) Joe - sample size
(2) Tracy and Don - tab results
(3) Jan - call group together when needed

D. WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED in decision-making at each step?

All group members

E. WHEN do you expect to accomplish each step?

Before the end of fall term 1988, the analysis will be in "Newsline"

F. What additional RESOURCES will you need to reach your goal?
(Consider materials, equipment, staff time, etc.)

(1) Paul Guthrie's assistance (6-8 hours)
(2) Involvement from Admission's Office (5 hours)
(3) Postage for mailing questionnaire (est. $150)

G. How will you know when your goal has been accomplished?

Analize results and published in "Newsline"

H. (Optional) How will you celebrate reaching your goal?

Party provided by the administration

Appendix II
Sample Group Action Plan Summary

GROUP ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

Group	Facilitator	Topic	Go	Review	Category
Wild Lilac	Jill Ward	Collect student success stories & "best kept secrets" of CCC	X		Marketing/ public relations
Chariot's Flight	Moothart/ Johnen	Quarterly newsletter to the community (B. Johnen,A. Scott)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Rawhide Ridge	Joan Mount	Publish staff profiles in catalog (L.MacDonald,T.Cooter)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Barefoot Boy	Kay Gerard	Publish staff and faculty profiles		X	Marketing/ public relations
Wistful Vision	Connie Judd	PSA's in malls, on cable TV (pilot projects)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Green Dragon	Blaisdell/ Goward	Revise schedule to make more user friendly		X	Marketing/ public relations
Darting Bird/ Tufted Moss	Austin/Ford/ Berntson	News ad/column with "hotline"		X sample	Marketing/ public relations
Nightsong	Bev Haines	Marketing van (possible venture with business/ industry)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Lively Harbor	Carol Schaafsma	Funds to purchase marketing time for faculty (like curriculum development)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Grassy Marsh	Craven/ Fishfader	Establish recruitment dept.	X task force	X proposal	Marketing/ public relations
Hopewell	Dawn Marges	Marketing action task force(Sharp, Odle)		X	Marketing/ public relations
Woodelves	Carol Brownlow	Marketing action plan fund		X	Marketing/ public relations

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges JUN 30 1989